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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 05 ROME 000506

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PASS TO TRANSPORTATION SECURITY ADMINISTRATION (TSA) AND
GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE (GAO); DEPARTMENT ALSO FOR
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E.O. 12958: DECL: X1

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SUBJECT: TURIN 2006 WINTER OLYMPICS: USG SITUATION REPORT
(SITREP) #14, 02/20/2006

REF: ROME 504

Classified By: Deborah Graze, Consul General Milan for reason 1.4 (d)

11. (SBU) The following cable provides information on security, public diplomacy, and consular activities in Turin, Italy, for the 2006 Winter Olympic Games.

12. (SBU) The interagency Olympic Security Coordination (OSC) Office can be contacted on a 24-hour basis at the following numbers:

USG Joint Operations Center (JOC): 39-011-55-99-793/794/564
(tel); 011-39-011-55-99-590 (fax)

USG Threat Integration Center (TIC): 39-011-55-99-790/791
(tel); 011-39-011-55-99-590 (fax).

13. (SBU) Attached is a key for USG acronyms used within this cable: the inter-agency Olympic Security Coordination Office (OSC); the USG inter-agency Olympic Security Operations Center OSOC, including the 24/7 Joint Operations Center (JOC) and Threat Integration Center (TIC); the National Information Center for the Winter Olympics (CNIO), which is a Government of Italy (GOI) hosted multinational center; the Turin Olympics Organizing Committee (TOROC); the International Olympics Committee (IOC); the US Olympic Committee (USOC); the Transportation Security Administration (TSA); Public Affairs/Public Diplomacy (PA/PD); Consular Affairs (CA); and the Italian Ministry of Interior (MOI).

KEY EVENTS

14. (U) Olympic events took place without significant incident on 02/19/2006. Several Olympic alpine competitions were postponed due to snowfall in the mountains.

15. (U) The final day of the "No TAV" symposium concluded uneventfully. As promised by the organizers, symposium participants did not conduct demonstrations over the weekend and the event did not distract from the Olympic competitions being held nearby. Adverse weather in the mountains helped to limit the number of people attending the series of meetings.

SECURITY

Terrorist Activity/Threats:

16. (S/NF) There is no reporting to suggest a specific, credible threat to Olympic sporting events or participants. Italian authorities continue to monitor indications of terrorist activity elsewhere in Italy, particularly in nearby Milan; refer to IIR 5 398 6522 06 and TD-314/10053-06. In addition, Italian security forces remain alert to the potential for disruption by activist groups and OSOC continues to coordinate with Italian counterparts to identify activity that could impact on the safety of U.S. interests within the Olympic theater.

Demonstrations/Protests:

17. (S/NF) As noted in REFTEL, the frequency and intensity of anti-Olympics protests has decreased since the beginning of the Games. However, according to Italian officials, the possibility exists that some groups may focus on protests against Olympic sponsors before the end of the Games. Please refer to TD-314/12103-06 for additional information. OSOC continues to pass specific information to U.S. Olympic sponsors regarding demonstrations in order to eliminate potential conflicts between protesters and sponsored events and other soft targets.

18. (S/NF) Violent protests in reaction to the publication of

the controversial Prophet Mohammad cartoons continue to occur around the world, and are widely reported in Italian media. Following the recent attack on the Italian Consulate in Benghazi, Libya, Italian security forces are alert for indications that the unrest could spread to Italy and disrupt the Olympic Games. The 02/18/2006 resignation of Italian Reform Minister Roberto Calderoli has helped to dampen domestic tension in Italy and the widely-reported 02/18/2006 visit of Foreign Minister Fini to a Roman mosque was well-received by the Muslim community. As of 02/19/2006, Italian authorities had no indication that the Muslim community in Turin and northern Italy intended to demonstrate in reaction to Calderoli's controversial t-shirts. Refer to TD-314/12104-06 for additional information. OSOC continues to coordinate with Italian counterparts to identify security concerns affecting U.S. athletes and spectators as a result of the cartoon controversy, or reports of prisoner abuse at Abu Ghraib prison and Guantanamo Bay.

Incidents:

¶9. (SBU) Olympic sponsors continue to report hotel room break-ins to OSOC. The majority of reported incidents occurred when the victims were out to dinner or engaged in hospitality events. Many of the targeted rooms were situated on the first or second floors of the hotels, allowing easy access and quick escape routes for the perpetrators. All of the hotels were open to the public without an accreditation system in place. To date, American citizens have not been the targets of these thefts; however, U.S. Olympic sponsor representatives and guests are housed in at least one of the hotels experiencing increased crime. OSOC has requested that all U.S. sponsors continue to provide information on criminal activity. OSOC will use this information to identify crime trends in Turin.

¶10. (SBU) On 02/19/2006, the Director of Security for Olympics Sponsor Nike informed OSOC that a suspicious bag was reported at a bus stop in front of the Nike Olympic Hospitality Center. Italian law enforcement officers responding to the incident were unable to locate the bag and a subsequent review of security camera footage did not reveal any suspicious items. Due to recent reports of suspicious bags at various private sector facilities, Nike was concerned that the incident may have been an attempt to probe security operations. OSOC continues to work with U.S. Olympic sponsors to address security concerns; OSOC through CNIO liaison has previously noted to MOI the ongoing USG concerns regarding recent incidents involving suspicious bags in public locations.

¶11. (SBU) On 02/19/2006, USOC reported that unidentified individuals in nearby apartments took photographs of the USA House. OSOC is working with USOC to obtain additional details on the incident and to determine the specific location from which the photos were taken. OSOC continues to enjoy a close working relationship with USOC security representatives.

¶12. (SBU) The MOI passed information through OSOC to USOC regarding the travel of a U.S. Paralympic athlete to Italy. The athlete is currently restricted from travel to countries enforcing the Schengen Agreement, as the Government of France had previously prohibited his travel due to prior drug charges. The MOI advised that the athlete must apply for a limited visa that would allow him to travel only to Italy. OSOC has passed this information to USOC for follow-up; CA colleagues have been informed for background information.

SECURITY OPERATIONS

¶13. (S/NF) In information provided to OSOC CNIO liaison, Italian authorities stated security at Olympic venues will not be increased in response to the recent attack on Italian diplomatic interests in Libya. However, media reporting and OSOC interaction with Italian counterparts continue to indicate that Italian law enforcement officials remain concerned about the possibility of disruptive incidents or protests stemming from the Prophet Mohammad cartoons and the actions of former Italian Reform Minister Calderoli. Refer to TD-314/12104-06 for additional information regarding Italian interest in Olympics security. Through CNIO liaison, OSOC has requested that the MOI provide any additional information regarding changes to security countermeasures at Olympic venues.

VIPs

¶14. (SBU) The U.S. Ambassador to Italy departed Turin and returned to Rome without incident on 02/19/2006.

¶15. (SBU) The White House Delegation to the Closing

Ceremonies, led by former New York Mayor Rudolph Giuliani, is scheduled to arrive in Turin on 02/24/2006. Press coverage of the delegation continues to be minimal. OSOC is working with Italian counterparts to ensure that the delegation's visit takes place without disturbance.

PENDING MATTERS

¶16. (SBU) OSOC continues to work with Italian counterparts on the investigation of the theft of a TOROC vehicle pass.

PUBLIC AFFAIRS/PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

¶17. (U) As of 02/20/2006, Italian media continues to focus on domestic political issues, particularly the ongoing cartoon controversy, the resignation of Italian Reform Minister Calderoli, and the next steps to be taken by his Northern League party, which holds several key positions in the Italian Government. Italian daily Il Giornale circulated a story based on Northern League extremist paper Padania's front page photos of Calderoli's cartoon t-shirts. Other dailies noted upcoming European Union (EU) Justice and Interior Ministerial meetings that will likely focus on the cartoon issue, as well as the start of Council of Europe hearings on alleged CIA secret prisons and renditions in Europe. The combination of the EU/COE meetings and Italian domestic politics ensures that the cartoon issue and related protests worldwide will continue to be front-page stories in Italy.

¶18. (U) Coverage of the Olympics and security-related matters remains generally positive. Italian gold medalists are front-page news in most papers. Italian media has commented that the attention of "No TAV" protesters has recently turned to the construction of another high-speed rail line outside of the Turin area, which may cause further decrease in the amount of disruption activity at the Olympics. As noted in REFTEL, stories on doping by Olympic athletes continues to receive coverage, with television news picking up on the story of an Austrian banned coach being detained over the weekend on doping charges.

¶19. (U) Major business/economic news daily Il Sole/24 Ore reported on the economics and technology for the Olympics, in an article titled "The Electronic Eyes on the Games." The article refers to a TOROC ops center monitoring technological controls, including Kodak-produced security badges and credentials. The article provides details on expenditures, reporting that the GOI is spending 90 million Euros for security, compared to 310 million dollars spent by USG in Salt Lake City. The article reports 9000 additional security personnel brought to Turin for the Games, and such additional security measures as a NATO AWACS monitoring skies above the region.

¶20. (U) PA Olympics office continues to attend relevant press briefings, to handle media inquiries and to plan media coverage of the White House Delegation to the Closing Ceremonies. USOC-based PA staff is supporting U.S. athlete press conferences, possible participation in U.S. speaker programs, and facilitating interaction with Italian media, to include translating and disseminating U.S. team information. The Public Affairs Office in Turin may be reached at 39-011-55-99-368.

CONSULAR AFFAIRS

¶21. (U) On 02/19/2006, CA received four requests from American citizens for emergency services. Two Amcits applied for replacements to lost passports; one of these individuals was referred to Consulate General Milan due to his imminent travel plans. The Consular Office also accepted the passport renewal application of an Amcit whose passport had expired; he will be traveling to the U.S. after the Olympics.

¶22. (SBU) CA received reports of two more Amcits sanctioned for selling Olympic tickets without proper license. The Amcits visited the Consular Office in Turin to obtain a list of English-speaking attorneys and indicated that they wish to appeal the sanction.

¶23. (SBU) On the evening of 02/19/2006, the Consular Office in Turin worked with the consular duty officer in Milan to assist an elderly Amcit's return to Turin from a mountain Olympic venue. The Amcit had been hospitalized for hypothermia.

¶24. (U) The Consular Office may be contacted at the following numbers: 011-5599-330 (tel.); 011-5599-551 (fax). Additional information may be found at <http://milan.usconsulate.gov>.

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